

## West Highland Way



Included	Not included
Guide	Travel from Home to and from Glasgow
Train from Glasgow to the start of your walk	Travel Insurance
Baggage transfer (limited transport for clients between hotels is possible)	Any extra Transport during the trip
9 nights' full board accommodation all en-suite	Personal Equipment
Breakfast, lunch, 2 course dinner and snacks during each day of your walk	Additional snacks
Glengoyne Distillery tour	Alcoholic drinks
Train from Fort William to Glasgow	

**TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:** Take on the challenge of Scotland's most famous and one of the world's greatest long-distance trails - the West Highland Way. Immerse yourself in the spectacular scenery as you walk through the beautiful landscapes of Loch Lomond, Rannoch Moor and Glencoe. With the knowledge and experience of an expert guide, learn about the area's history and legends, as well as the flora and fauna along the route.



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**INTRODUCTION:** The West Highland Way is a classic long-distance trail, covering over 95 miles (150km) from Milngavie on the outskirts of Glasgow to Fort William in the Highlands. The route travels along the 'bonnie banks' of Loch Lomond, across the atmospheric Rannoch Moor, past dramatic Glencoe and over the high pass of the Devil's Staircase before finishing in Fort William, at the foot of Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis. Each evening you'll arrive at our hand-picked accommodation where your luggage will be waiting for you.

**WEATHER:** There may still be chance of some snow on the top of the hills we are going up. There will defiantly be snow on the top of Ben Nevis at this time of year but this should not cause us any problems. However, the Guide has the final say in relation to mountain days. Depending on the weather and conditions under foot.

## **DAY ONE - THE JOURNEY BEGINS: WALKING NORTH!**

We meet at Glasgow Queen Street Station at 8:30am. I will take you on a short train journey to Milngavie, where we'll drop off our bags, and then we start walking! Although starting out close to Glasgow you are soon walking through a wild landscape. This part of the journey follows what was an important route in prehistoric times and I will help you spot some standing stones from the late Stone Age. We'll arrive at the accommodation tonight in time to settle in before enjoying a welcome dinner – I hope we will be making a short detour to visit the local Glengoyne whisky distillery as a way to toast the start of the trip, followed by lunch. We are staying at the Winnock Hotel in Drymen. Drymen is a small village we are only staying a short distance apart and we will be eating in a local hotel. The village also boasts The Clachan Inn which was first licenced in 1734.

**Accommodation:** The Winnock Hotel

<http://www.winnockhotel.com/>

Distance: Guide book 12 miles. Ascent 689'. (GPS from my last trip: Distance 12.5m Ascent 1758').



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## **DAY TWO - WALKING TO LOCH LOMOND**

The trail leaves Drymen and passes through Garadhban Forest. Leaving the forest, we'll take a detour to climb Conic Hill - though just 361m high, it offers fantastic views over Loch Lomond. This area is resplendent with yellow gorse and there is a rich variety of bird life that we will endeavour to identify.

Reaching the eastern banks of Loch Lomond at Balmaha, we follow the shore through forest until we reach the tranquil setting of Rowardennan, which is nestled at the foot of Ben Lomond. The hotel has breathtaking views of Ben Lomond, Loch Lomond and the mountains to the North.

**Accommodation:** The Rowardennan Hotel for 2 nights. A laundry service is available at this hotel.

<http://www.rowardennanhotel.co.uk>

Distance: Guide Book 14 miles Ascent 1411'. (GPS distance 15 miles Ascent 3592').

## **DAY THREE – BEN LOMOND**

Ben Lomond (Scottish Gaelic: Beinn Laomainn, 'Beacon Hill'), 974 m (3196 ft), is a distinctive mountain in the Scottish Highlands. Situated on the eastern shore of Loch Lomond, it is the most southerly of the Munros. Ben Lomond lies within the Ben Lomond National Memorial Park and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, property of the National Trust for Scotland.

Its accessibility from Glasgow and elsewhere in central Scotland, together with the relative ease of ascent from Rowardennan, makes it one of the most popular of all the Munros. On a clear day, it is visible from the higher grounds of Glasgow and eastwards across the low-lying central valley of Scotland. This may have led to it being named 'Beacon Mountain', as with the equally far-seen Lomond Hills in Fife. Ben Lomond summit can also be seen from Ben Nevis, the highest peak in Britain, over 44 miles (71km) The West Highland Way runs along the western base of the mountain, by the loch.



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Ben Lomond's popularity in Scotland has resulted in several namesakes in the former British colonies of Australia, New Zealand, Trinidad and the United States – see this list. The mountain is mentioned directly in the popular folk song The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond.

Distance 7.5 miles. Ascent 3300'. Time 5-6 hours.

## **DAY FOUR - THE WILD SHORELINE OF LOCH LOMOND**

Starting out with views of Ben Lomond, this is a challenging stage but the combination of differing terrain, scenery and views make it very rewarding. This was an area frequented by Rob Roy McGregor and as you walk in his footsteps, I hope to keep you entertained with stories of his frequent mischief! Rougher terrain means that the going is slower but it's wonderful to be in such wild country. The trail improves towards the end of the day as we near our next destination, the tiny settlement of Invernarnan.

**Accommodation:** Beinglas campsite & accommodation complex

<https://www.beinglascampsite.co.uk/>

We will be having our dinner at the Drovers Inn, where the Drovers rested whilst driving their animals down to the markets in the Borders and England. This Inn boasts 300 years of Scottish hospitality!

<http://www.thedroversinn.co.uk>

Guide Book: Distance 14 miles. Ascent 1558' (GPS 14.5miles Ascent 3727').



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## **DAY FIVE - INTO STRATHFILLAN**

We're in the Highlands now, where the mountains seem to stretch all the way to the sky. Indeed, the local mountains are known as the 'Arrochar Alps'. Our day begins with a walk-through Glen Falloch before we turn northwards into Strathfillan. The landscape gets wilder and your guide will point out some of the hardier plants that grow in this area and talk about how they were used by the clansmen and women in the past. As we approach Tyndrum we are rewarded with wonderful views of Ben Lui rising up in the west.

**Accommodation:** The Tyndrum Inn

<http://thetyndruminn.co.uk>

Guide Book: Distance 13 miles. Ascent 1608'. (GPS 12.5 miles Ascent 2929').

## **DAY SIX - NORTH TO GLENCOE**

This fantastic day begins with a climb out of Tyndrum, with the trail running next to the West Highland Railway line. At the top of a pass, the sweeping flanks of Ben Dorain dominate the view. A short detour will take us to a carved stone seat said to contain the sword of Robert the Bruce. Continuing north, we reach the tiny settlement of Bridge of Orchy. This is where we stop for the night but first we have some Munros to climb!

**Accommodation:** The Bridge of Orchy Hotel

<http://www.bridgeforchy.co.uk/>



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## **DAY SEVEN - WALK TO INVERORAN**

The shapely peaks of the Black Mountains now lie to the west, while the wilds of Rannoch Moor stretch into the distance in front of you. Following the trail across this expanse of moorland, we eventually reach Glencoe where we would normally stay at the Kingshouse Hotel however is closed for a major refurbishment. We will therefore take a short ride to Ballachulish.

Accommodation: RiverBeds Luxury Wee Lodges with Hot Tubs

<http://www.stayglencoe.co.uk/>

Distance: 12 miles. Ascent 1673'. Add in Ben Inverveigh 2096', additional distance 4 miles and ascent 1089'.

## **DAY EIGHT - THE DEVIL'S STAIRCASE**

This is a shorter day but with the biggest ascent of the route. Leaving the Kingshouse, we walk into Glencoe then climb the trail known as the 'Devil's Staircase'. It is steep with some switchbacks but no scrambling is involved. At the top of the pass at 547m, we are rewarded with wonderful views of Glencoe and Loch Leven. Your guide will be able to point out the individual peaks in this sea of mountains you are looking at and perhaps tell the tale of The Massacre of Glencoe. Descending into the next valley, we follow a good trail to our next stop, the small village of Kinlochleven.

**Accommodation:** Tigh Na Cheo Guesthouse

<http://www.tigh-na-cheo.co.uk/>

Guide Book: Distance 9 miles. Ascent 1411'. (GPS 9.2 miles. Ascent 3277').



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## **DAY NINE - TRAIL'S END AT FORT WILLIAM**

The day starts with a steep climb to wake us up after breakfast! We cross a pass at 899' (274m), taking in views across to Ben Nevis – the highest mountain in Scotland. After crossing the pass, the hard work of the day is done and we walk past old sheilings (summer dwellings for shepherds) with views over Lochan Lunn Da-Bhr. Your guide may share the story of the mythical bull that makes this area home and terrorises the crofter's cattle! The trail then descends into beautiful Glen Nevis and then into Fort William itself - we've done it! We finish the walk into Fort William for a couple of beers.

**Accommodation:** Ben Nevis Leisure & Spa Hotel

<https://strathmorehotels-thebennevis.com/>

Guide Book: Distance 15 miles. Ascent 1558'. (GPS 15 miles. Ascent 3139').

## **DAY TEN – Return Journey to Glasgow**

After a leisurely breakfast you are free to make your way home at a suitable time - most people will take the scenic West Highland Railway back to Glasgow, which has several departures daily. This is a fantastic way of rounding off the trip, travelling through some amazing scenery.

## **AMENITIES & SERVICES**

The West Highland Way was Scotland's first official long-distance route. Originally conceived in the 1960s, it was completed in October 1980. The Way takes you from Milngavie to Fort William, a distance of 96 miles (154 km). The route leads you from the outskirts of Scotland's largest city to the foot of its highest mountain, following the shores of its largest freshwater loch. It passes from the Lowlands, across the Highland Boundary Fault and on into the Scottish Highlands. Much of the Way follows ancient and historic routes of communication and makes use of Drove Roads, 18th Century Military Roads and Disused Railway Tracks. The Way passes through a wide range of different terrains, ranging from lowland moors, through dense woodland and rolling hills, to high mountainous regions.



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This variety of environments provides habitats for a diverse range of wildlife species, both flora and fauna. Some species are more common than others and some are rarely seen. The Way is a magnificent walk and gives you the opportunity to enjoy some of the best scenery and sights that Scotland has to offer. We hope you have a great and memorable walk and that our handpicked accommodation adds to your experience on the Way.

### **MILNGAVIE:**

Milngavie lies about 10 miles/16 km north west of Glasgow and is on the edge of its conurbation. Milngavie (pronounced "Mull-guy") has become best known as the start of the West Highland Way, the 96 mile/154 km Long Distance Route to Fort William. The history of Milngavie dates back to at least 1600, when there was a mill here in a village known at the time as 'Mullgay'. The town's early growth owed much to the textile industry; James Watt was experimenting with chlorine bleaching here by the 1780s. Milngavie's more recent development has owed more to its proximity of Glasgow and its excellent transport links. It had a railway connection to Glasgow by 1871 and the city's trams reached out as far as Milngavie in 1924. The trams were only a relatively temporary feature and service ceased in 1956. Today, Milngavie is a thriving and bustling place. Stand in the main street for more than a few minutes and you will be approached by someone carrying a backpack, asking you to take a photograph of them as they stand next to the obelisk marking the official start of the Way!

### **DRYMEN:**

Drymen is a small village in the west of Scotland forming the gateway to East Loch Lomond. In the 1700s Drymen found itself on the route of the military road from Stirling to Dumbarton. The Clachan Inn, on a corner of The Square, dates back to this period and carries signs proclaiming that it was first licensed in 1734. The area is steeped in history and is Clan Buchanan country. Rob Roy MacGregor was a 'local' and this is the area in which he carried out his famous (or infamous) exploits against the Duke of Montrose.



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## **BALMAHA, ROWARDENNAN & LOCH LOMOND:**

Balmaha: The name Balmaha derives from the Gaelic Bealach Mo-Cha, 'the pass of Saint Mo-Cha'. The pass referred to is now named The Pass of Balmaha, a narrow route between hills at the north end of the village, carrying the road north along Loch Lomond. It is a picturesque village situated at the foot of Conic Hill and is popular with day-trippers and walkers alike. Loch Lomond is the largest freshwater body of water in Britain, is over 23 miles (37 km) long and 5 miles (8 km) wide at its widest point. The Scottish Highlands and Lowlands are separated by the Highland Boundary Fault Line which traverses Loch Lomond itself. Loch Lomond's beauty has drawn visitors from all over the world. Famous writers such as Boswell, Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth and John Keats have all visited its shores. The small village of Rowardennan nestles at the foot of Ben Lomond (3,193ft/974m), Scotland's most southerly Munro.

## **INVERSNAD & INVERARNAN:**

Inversnaid: The West Highland Way continues northwards from Rowardennan along the "bonnie banks" of Loch Lomond and through the tiny village of Inversnaid. Just prior to Inversnaid you will pass the lovely Arklet Falls. The Inversnaid Hotel marks this stage and sits right on the banks of Loch Lomond.

Inverarnan: The village of Inverarnan is situated at the south end of Glen Falloch and just beyond the northern point of Loch Lomond. It sits on the banks of the River Falloch which flows into Loch Lomond. The most famous landmark at this stage is the 'Drovers Inn' one of the best known pubs in Scotland. The Drovers Inn was originally used by Highland Drovers who drove their cattle down the side of Loch Lomond to the markets. Beinglas takes its name from Ben Glas, Gaelic for Grey Mountain, down which the dramatic 'Grey Mares Tail' waterfall thunders.



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Crianlarich: (Gaelic: A' Chrìon Làraich or "Low Pass") is a village in the Stirling district of Scotland about 6 miles/9.5 km north-east of the head of Loch Lomond. Crianlarich has been a major crossroads for north and westbound journeys in Scotland since mediaeval times. In the 1750s, two military roads met in the village and in the 19th Century it became a railway junction on what is now the West Highland Line. In the 20th Century it became the meeting point of the major A82 and A85 roads. It is a primary destination in Scotland and signposted from as far as Glasgow in the south, Perth in the east, Oban in the west and Fort William in the north. With a population of circa 200 the village calls itself "The Gateway to the Highlands." Crianlarich lies in the glen of Strathfillan at the north western extent of the Trossachs, lying in the shadow of several Munro peaks, notably Ben More, Stob Binnein and Cruach Ardrain.

Tyndrum: (Taigh an Droma in Gaelic, "the house on the ridge") lies in Strathfillan at the southern edge of Rannoch Moor and is overshadowed by Ben Lui, (1130m), another Munro. The village has historic connections with both Robert the Bruce and Rob Roy MacGregor. In 1306 Bruce suffered one of his rare defeats at nearby Dal Righ, the King's Field. Local tradition tells of his retreating soldiers throwing their heavy weapons into Lochan nan Arm. The defeat came at the hands of his rivals, the MacDougalls; during the battle, Alastair MacDougall ripped a brooch from Bruce as he made off and the Celtic "Brooch of Lorne" is still in the possession of the MacDougall family today. Another Scottish hero, Rob Roy, had a close call escaping from the rear window of the old village Inn while his pursuers were entering the front door. Tyndrum is a gold, silver & lead mining centre and the old mining cottages can be seen at 'Clifton' (the row of cottages over the A82 from the Green Welly Stop). Up on the hillside beyond Clifton the tailings of a former lead mine can be seen on Sron nan Colan hill. The current gold mine is a couple of miles/km to the south and west of Tyndrum at Cononish.



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## **BRIDGE OF ORCHY & INVERORAN:**

The story of Bridge of Orchy and the Inveroran area is a story of travel and of travellers. In the years after the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite uprisings the Government put a huge amount of effort into building roads and bridges over the length and breadth of the Highlands. Until then drove routes had existed to move cattle to the lowland markets. However, most travel took place by sea and most significant settlements hugged coasts or major rivers. A phase of road building during the 18th Century was intended to provide a means of moving troops quickly around the interior to suppress rebellion. These were the military roads built by General Wade and later by Major Caulfield. They built some 1200 miles/1930 km of road and 700 bridges in the years from 1725 and 1767 and in doing so transformed the Highlands. The old military road crosses the A82 at the crossroads in the centre of Bridge of Orchy, before descending past the hotel to the 1751 bridge over the River Orchy, also built by Major Caulfield. The bridge gave the village its name and from it the old road carries on round the western end of Loch Tulla to Forest Lodge. In doing so it passes the Inveroran Hotel which can trace its origins back even further than the bridge to 1708. Beyond Forest Lodge the old road is closed to motorised traffic as it carries on to Glen Coe, though it now provides a path for walkers on the West Highland Way.

## **KINGSHOUSE:**

Built in the 17th Century, Kingshouse Hotel is believed to be one of Scotland's oldest licensed inns. The building was used after the Battle of Culloden (16th April 1746) as a barracks for troops of George III, hence the name Kings House. It was their task to keep the Highlanders under subjection and to capture their elusive champion Bonnie Prince Charlie. The Hotel's history is colourful and varied. Dorothy Wordsworth wrote in 1803 "Never did I see such a miserable, such wretched place." By the 21st Century the old building has been altered considerably and the owners together with their staff assure you of a warm welcome. Kingshouse has views to the Buachaille Etive Mòr at the head of Glen Etive. Nearby is Glencoe (Gleann Comhann in Gaelic) one of the most spectacular places in Scotland.



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With a wild and haunting beauty Glencoe is often said to mean 'Glen of Weeping' perhaps with some reference to the infamous Massacre of Glencoe which took place there in 1692. However, 'Gleann Comhann' does not translate as 'Glen of Weeping' rather the Glen is named after the River Coe which runs through it and bore this name long prior to the 1692 incident.

### **KINLOCHLEVEN:**

Kinlochleven has a population of just over 1000. It is located at the head of Loch Leven and developed in the 1900s when the North British Aluminium Company built a hydro scheme and smelter in the area. As the smelter developed, so the population grew. At its peak the smelter employed over 800 people. The smelter closed in June 2000 but a sense of community continues. Now the growing popularity of the West Highland Way brings a steady stream of visitors to the village. Loch Leven is one of the most attractive lochs in Scotland and the village is frequented by climbers heading for the nearby Mamores.

### **FORT WILLIAM:**

Fort William sits on Loch Linnhe with the majestic Ben Nevis, at 4409 feet/1344 metres, UK's highest mountain, as its backdrop. The town takes its name from the fort that William, Prince of Orange built in 1690. Fort William was successfully held by government troops during the Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745. However, the surrounding area saw great turmoil. Today such a bloody past is difficult to imagine and the town is the main centre for visitors to Lochaber and the Western Highlands.

Ben Nevis (Gaelic: Beinn Nibheis): The highest mountain in the United Kingdom is located at the western end of the Grampian Mountains in the Lochaber area of Scotland, close to the coastal town of Fort William. Known simply as "The Ben" to many walkers and climbers, it attracts an estimated 100,000 visitors a year; around three quarters of these use the well-constructed track from the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel for the ascent.



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For climbers the main attraction lies in attaining the summit by the Carn Mòr Dearg Arête. The summit at 4409 feet/ 1344 metres above sea level, features the ruins of an observatory which was permanently staffed between 1883 and 1904. The scenic West Highland Railway runs from here to Mallaig. Just north of Fort William lies the original medieval Inverlochy Castle. A little further north still you will pass Neptune's Staircase, the flight of eight locks near the southern end of the Caledonian Canal on the Great Glen Way.

### **ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:**

This section is designed to provide you with all the information you need to know pre-booking. Once you have made a booking with us we will send you comprehensive Trip Documents and equipment list. Included is luggage transfer for 1 bag per person for the duration of the trip, meaning you will only have to carry a day rucksack while walking. Train tickets from Glasgow Queen Street to Milngavie and from Fort William back to Glasgow. There are two trains leaving Fort William for Glasgow, 0744 arrive Glasgow 11.31 and 11.40 arrive Glasgow at 1530. If you let me know which one you want I will book tickets equally you are free to remain in Fort William and further explore this outstanding area.

**GETTING THERE AND AWAY:** I will meet you in the centre of Glasgow Queen Street Railway Station at 08:30 on Day 1 of your trip. Most people choose to stay in Glasgow before the trip. You can depart any time after breakfast on Day 11.

**ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD:** This is a mobile itinerary where we walk to a new accommodation each day. We handpick the best available accommodation along the route, which ranges from small guesthouses, Highland inns, small hotels and bed and breakfast establishments. Our accommodation partners are carefully chosen according to a number of factors - charming locations, very good facilities and a reputation for providing Highland hospitality. Wherever they are available, we will reserve en-suite rooms for you. Breakfast is provided each morning, as well as lunch and snack throughout the trip. Dinner is provided throughout the trip but it will not always be where we are staying.



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**(Due to the popularity of this route we cannot guarantee that we will be able to book the hotels offered, unless the trip has been booked a minimum 8 months in advance and 50% deposit of the full cost has been paid. Other suitable venues will be considered if booking is 8 months or less).**

**LUGGAGE TRANSFER:** Whilst on the West Highland Way your luggage will be transferred each day between accommodations, and your bags will be waiting for you when you arrive at your next accommodation each day. One bag per person is included in the trip price, and this bag should be of a reasonable size and weight (maximum weight permitted is 20kg). Important note: If you are planning on bringing more than one bag per person, please note that the luggage transfer company is entitled to levy an additional charge of £20 per bag - this will be payable directly to the transfer company. We strongly recommend that no laptops, tablets or similar items, and no fragile or breakable objects (eg glass bottles wine, whisky, etc) are placed in luggage to be transferred - we cannot be held responsible for any damage.

**TRIP GRADING:** This trip is a point to point walking trail, where you trek to a new accommodation each day. Therefore, you need to be fit enough to reach the destination each day - there are no short cuts possible. You will be following marked trails with generally good terrain underfoot, but occasionally rocky or boggy in places. There will also be ascents each day, and one stiff ascent of 300m over the 'Devil's Staircase'. There are 3 extra mountain days. You will be carrying just a day-pack as the rest of your luggage is transferred to the next accommodation for you. We would suggest that you need to be in reasonable shape to undertake this trek. To help you decide if you are fit enough for this trip, ask yourself: Can you comfortably walk for up to 7 hours a day? Can you walk 15 miles (25km) or more, including some ascent, with rough ground in places? When did you last do this?

**HOW TO BOOK:** We will send you a booking / medical form and a 25% deposit.



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**INSURANCE:** If travelling from a European country outside the UK it is a condition of booking that you take out relevant insurance to cover you for your trip. This should include medical cover, curtailment, sickness and injury cancellation prior to the trip and personal accident cover. We also strongly recommend you have cover for other travel and personal effects. If travelling from within the UK, we recommend you are insured for personal sickness & injury cancellation prior to the trip and any travel insurance you feel appropriate to your needs.